



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

March 21, 2003

FORMER TAMPA POLICE OFFICER SENTENCED FOR CIVIL RIGHTS CONSPIRACY

Lawrence Christian, age 43, was sentenced today to 24 months' imprisonment before United States District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich for conspiracy to violate civil rights by depriving a citizen of property without due process of law while Christian was working as a police officer for the City of Tampa Police Department. During court proceedings Christian admitted to stealing two postal money orders with a value of \$534.32 from a retail theft suspect he had arrested at the Neiman-Marcus Department Store on N. West Shore Boulevard in Tampa on April 28, 2002. Christian admitted that he subsequently forged another individual's name on the payee section of the postal money orders and gave the checks to that individual to negotiate for cash. Christian's co-defendant, Calvin D. Johnson was charged in an indictment in October, 2002 with conspiracy to violate civil rights and he has pled guilty to that charge. A sentencing date for Johnson has not been set as of this date.

In sentencing Christian, Judge Kovachevich found that Christian had not accepted responsibility for his crime and further increased Christian's sentence for attempting to obstruct justice, based upon Christian submitting a false affidavit in support of a sentencing motion.

In addition to the 24 month term of imprisonment, Christian was ordered to make restitution to the victim of his crime and to served a two-year term of supervised released following his prison sentence.

This case was investigated by the Tampa Police Department, United States Postal Service and the United States Attorney's Office. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jeffrey S. Downing.